THE ART OF RIDING

BY

H. G. ENGLISH

Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

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Dedicated,

BY PERMISSION,

TO THE

Right Hon. the Earl of Coventry,

MASTER OF

HER MAJESTY'S BUCKHOUNDS.

PREFACE.

In writing this little Book I have in view but one object, and that is to lay down a few simple, easy Rules, by which anyone can learn the Art of Riding easily and gracefully without the help of a Riding Master. I could easily, of course, have spun it out to much greater length, and still have been within the limits of my subject; but it would nevertheless have partaken more or less of the character of padding; and

while the Book would have been more bulky, it would not have been so useful, as I hope it will be in its present form. I can only say that riding has been to me a life-long study and practice, the fruit of which I now offer to the public, in the hope that it may be of use to those who are not able to command the services of a good Riding Master. And I would even hope that it may contain some useful hints for those who have long ago ceased to take lessons in the ordinary sense. I am now sixty years of age, and I am almost as young in feeling, as healthy and as lithe and active

as I was thirty years ago, and I attribute this all to Riding. I hope a similar result may await my readers when they arrive at my age.

H. G. ENGLISH.

CHELTENHAM,
March 1st, 1890.

Yours faithfully
H. J. English

THE ART OF RIDING.

THE HORSE.

The horse, from every point of view, is an interesting study. More money and attention have been bestowed upon his breeding and training than upon those of any other animal; and perhaps we should not be far wrong in saying that he has monopolised more of both than all other animals put together. The breeding of horses was a favourite study of the ancients; and in the earliest dawn of history we find him occupying his niche in fame, side by side with great

kings and warriors. Every great conqueror has had his favourite horse, whose name is as well preserved in history as that of his master—from Alexander and Hannibal down to Napoleon and Wellington. Alexander and Bucephalus, Wellington and Copenhagen, are inseparable, and the mention of either conqueror calls up, by, as it were, a natural sequence, the name of his horse. The incident serves to mark not only the value of the horse to man, but also the peculiar and high place he holds in man's love and regard.

This recognition of the high place the horse holds in the animal world has not been confined to those civilized countries where, from their superior culture, we should naturally expect a due appreciation of so valuable and gifted an animal, but among the most barbarous and the

wildest tribes of men he has always been the object of peculiar regard and love. Among the wild Tartars and the inhabitants of the deserts of Arabia he may be truly said to form part of the family circle, and is treated with as much solicitude and kindness as the people of the desert bestow upon their own kindred. Little children lie down in safety side by side with him, and from their hands he will receive his food as gently as a lamb. Rarely or never is he known to abuse the kindness he receives; but, with an instinct finer and truer in some respects than human reason, he invariably returns with interest the love and consideration he receives.

He is at all times ready to answer to his master's call, and knows the voice of every member of the family as well as they know one another's.

No whip or spur is ever needed to obtain from him the utmost speed he is capable of; and his great delight is to spend his strength and swiftness in his master's service.

Comparing the Arab horse of the desert and all his fine qualities with our own English horses and their often vicious tempers, many will come to the conclusion that the Arab is gifted by Nature with a docility of temper which has been denied to the European horse. And when we consider how common it is for our horses to develop bad qualities, and how rarely we find any exhibit the gentleness and intelligence of the Arabian steed, it must be confessed there is apparently much reason for the belief. But it is not so: the Arab horse is by Nature in all essentials precisely the same

as the horses of Europe: the difference is in the training.

It is, unfortunately, but too often the custom of those in charge of our horses to use harsh methods of treatment, and frequently to act with downright cruelty to the animals, from the days of their birth; whereas the ears of the Arab colt are never assailed by the least harsh sound of unkindness, and during the whole course of his life he is a stranger to ill-treatment.

This kindly treatment, continued through generations, has produced the docile, and, at the same time, spirited creature we find in the Arabian horse. If the same kindness and consideration were bestowed upon our riders and carriage horses we should, in a few generations, have very few bad tempered or vicious animals amongst us.

It is pre-eminently the nature of the horse to be willing, to answer to the voice of gentle control, to be swift and alert; but it is also his nature to be nervous and timid, and extremely sensible to external impressions; and when these are of a violent character great and irreparable injury is done to his temper.

Those qualities which constitute his great value to man, and which by nature belong to him, are the very means through which, by bad treatment, his worst vices may be reached and developed. Just as the finest and most generous natures in men and women are the most susceptible to injustice and bad treatment, and receive the greatest injury therefrom, so the high, generous and spirited nature of the horse whilst answering to every gentle impulse in har-

mony with that nature, rebels violently against all harsh and brutal treatment, which is not only not in harmony with his fine constitution, but is directly antagonistic to it. He is quick to appreciate kindness, but equally quick to resent unkindness. The horse is not a bicycle or any other kind of machine on which you can jump and steer it by the turn of the hand merely by main force. He is much stronger than his rider, and is not slow in learning the kind of man he has on his back. His quick intelligence detects in a moment the incapacity of his rider, and if his temper is roused he is not slow to take advantage of it. Owing to the great complexity and development of his nervous system and brain the horse has a highly developed intelligence, and on this fact chiefly depends the reason of the rules to be observed in good riding.

The quality and perfection of his nervous system is second only to that of man; and, perhaps, we should not be far wrong in saying that, with one or two exceptions, his intelligence also is second only to that of man. It has been shown by a careful comparison of the nervous systems of animals that the intelligence displayed bears a close relation to the nervous system: each kind of animal rising in the scale of intelligence as its network of nerves becomes more complex and perfect. This fact should teach us how necessary it is in dealing with the horse to make him understand what it is we wish him to do. This can only be done by kindness and great patience, and any deficiency in this respect, especially in the latter, displayed by the trainer will frequently not only undo all the previous good, but render the animal incapable of further improvement, and develop all the bad qualities of his nature.

A good groom rarely enforces obedience to his commands by a loud harsh tone; and still more rarely by blows. Nevertheless, there are times, of course, when a sharp peremptory tone is necessary, and a good cut of the whip a salutary chastisement. But such corrections should never be resorted to except on occasions when the horse displays wilful disobedience, or manifests a tendency to exhibit little tricks of temper, which may frequently result in injury to the rider or others. For example, when two or more are riding together it is not unusual for a horse, otherwise good-tempered and well-mannered, to show jealousy of the horses beside him; and if this is not corrected the passion will grow, and sooner or later eventuate in vicious kicking or biting at his companions.

Whenever this evil trait appears, which is indicated by the drawing back of the ears and the protrusion of the mouth, the rider should at once deal him a sharp quick cut across the neck, accompanying the chastisement with peremptory words of disapproval. At the same time he should be careful to tighten the reins and brace up his muscles, so as to prevent the horse from jumping forward, and to be prepared for any manner of resentment he may possibly show. The very instant he feels the cut and hears the angry voice he knows full well that he has been misbehaving himself; and though he may resent it for the moment, owing to the rapidity of his nervous and muscular action, he will acknowledge the justice of the correction. This is proved by the way in which he will become gradually broken of any such bad traits.

It is not the fear of the whip that teaches him good manners, so much as his knowledge of wrong-doing, which is communicated to him by the higher intelligence and superior will of his master—man. You cannot frighten a horse into good manners; anything in the shape of fright has an injurious effect upon him, altogether different to the effect produced by correction with the whip.

The memory of the horse is similar in character to our own. We do not learn good habits without much training and many corrections, and the slips of memory are sometimes hard to obviate. So it is with the horse: his memory serves him tricks, and many repetitions of instruction are necessary before he acquires good manners. A Schoolmaster of great ex-

perience once told the writer that if a good habit was thoroughly inculcated by the hundredth repetition he was quite satisfied. Let us not then be too hard upon the horse if he appears slow in acquiring those good manners which fit him for the services and pleasures of man.

Great care should be taken never to ask him to do anything in the hunting field, where serious danger is unavoidable and evident. He places implicit confidence in man; but when he finds that confidence abused he is apt to reject the guidance of his rider, and refuse the performance of all feats similar in character to the one he was urged to, in which his danger was evident. A well-known Nobleman had in his stables a splendid hunter who was never known to refuse any leap. Being out one day with the hounds

he was asked to jump a stone wall, but, to the astonishment of his rider and those who knew his great qualities as a jumper, he refused flatly to take the wall, though urged several times with whip and spur.

Fortunately for both horse and rider the former knew the ground better than the latter; for, on the opposite side of the wall, at the point where the reckless rider would have taken the leap, was a deep hole or quarry, in which, in all human probability, both horse and man would have met with serious injury, if not total destruction. That horse was completely spoilt as a hunter, for never from that day forth could he be induced to take any jump, even of the simplest kind. He knew full well that he was being urged to his destruction, and this had such an effect

upon him that he lost completely all confidence in man, and would never again trust himself to his guidance in the matter of jumping. No doubt the horse was unnerved, or, as it was said, thoroughly cowed; but I believe it was not so much that his courage was shaken, as his confidence in the judgment of his rider.

Horses love hunting, and will follow the hounds without rider or guidance; and I venture to think that that horse would have followed the hounds without rider, and have taken, as before, with unabated courage, all leaps over the ground with which he was acquainted.

My experience as a teacher of riding—extending now over a period of forty years—has led me to place great importance on what I term conveying your thoughts to the horse, while

in the saddle. I shall have to insist on this more in detail, when I come to the lessons of practical instruction. But I desire here to make some general observations as to the meaning to be attached to the expression—"Conveying your thoughts to the horse." I have sometimes been asked, with an incredulous smile: "Is the horse a thought-reader?" I answer, Yes and No: Yes, in the sense in which alone thought can be conveyed, viz., through the material mechanism appropriate to the reception and conveyance of impressions: No, in any sense in which thought is divorced from that mechanism. An illustration will, I hope, make plain my meaning.

A short time ago considerable interest was excited by the performances of Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the so-called Thought-Reader. It will

be remembered that he was invited to the House of Commons by the leading M.P.'s of both Parties, who were desirous of testing the power he claimed of being able to read the thoughts that are passing through one's mind. In a private room of the House there could, of course, be no deception practised; and the intelligence of the illustrious audience forbade the hope of successful imposition of any kind, should such be necessary to sustain the credit and reputation of the celebrated performer. Mr. Cumberland was, therefore, fairly on his trial.

Mr. Gladstone was his first subject. The Right Honourable gentleman was requested to fix his mind upon some figures or numbers, and to exclude all other thoughts. Mr. Cumberland then took his hand, and with a

piece of chalk wrote on a board the number Mr. Gladstone had thought of. To the surprise of all present Mr. Gladstone acknowledged the correctness of the performance. The same thing was repeated with several other gentlemen, and in every case with perfect correctness. Not only could he detect what numbers the mind was dwelling on, but any object that occupied the thoughts he could distinctly trace on the board holding the right hand of the thinker.

It is said that he took the right hand of the Prince of Wales, and sketched in rude outline the figure of an elephant, and when it was completed it was observed that the animal had no tail. His Royal Highness laughingly observed that it was perfectly true he was thinking of a particular elephant, and that it was without a tail.

If you fixed your mind upon a particular spot, no matter how distant, he could take hold of your hand and lead you to the identical place. Now let it be observed, Mr. Cumberland could not look at you and read your thoughts, it was necessary that the part in which he possessed the most sensitive feeling should come in contact with that part of his subject in which there was also much sensitive feeling; and that is the hand. The explanation is that, so subtle and all-pervading is thought that the nerves and muscles are powerfully affected by it, and when a certain figure was thought of, the nerves and muscles of the hand were sufficiently powerfully affected to enable a delicate touch to detect the influence of the thought in this or that direction. Unconsciously to the thinker the mind works the muscles: an electric power darts instantaneously from the

thoughts throughout the whole animal body, and creates a pressure and motion of the muscles.

A wonderful instance of this was given by the above-named Thought Reader. A gentleman was accustomed to make the figure 9 in two ways, and when he came to this figure Mr. Cumberland hesitated; the gentleman at once explained that he was for the moment undecided which way he should make the figure; there was at once a conflict of pressures which was at once detected by Mr. Cumberland.

In introducing this topic I have somewhat digressed from my subject. But its value to our purpose will be seen by the reader. It proves that thought finds physical expression in the pressure of the muscles. Now the Horse, as I

have said, possesses an extremely fine nervous structure, and when you are on his back and throw your thoughts, as it were, in any direction you wish him to go, the muscular action accompanying your thoughts will be instantly detected by him, and he will answer to the influence.

There is, of course, vigorous muscular action required in making known your wishes to the Horse to get him to act promptly, but it all proceeds from the will, without which there can be no strong muscular action. Let a rider about to take a jump be uncertain, hesitate, or feel timid, and ten to one the horse will refuse it. The above, then, is what I mean by "conveying your thoughts to the Horse."

It is simply an electric current running like lightning from the brain through the nerves to the

muscles, and conveying to the horse the same impulse of feeling which you yourself experience. And the greater the harmony of action, the more complete the circulation of muscular action between horse and rider, the better and easier riding becomes. As soon as a man mounts his horse, the latter—if he is worth anything—braces himself for actual work: the rider should do the same, and never allow his horse to carry him as though he was simply a dummy rider.

In regard to the value of riding, as a healthy exercise, it is impossible to over-estimate it. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that nine cases in every ten of bad health which afflict men and women arise from causes which riding effectually removes. It promotes the healthy exercise of all the functions of the body, and stimulates the

circulation of the blood in a way which no other kind of exercise can accomplish. It prevents the accumulation of unhealthy fat, by bringing into vigorous play all the muscles of the body. More illness is due to the sluggish action of the organs connected with excretion than many people are aware of; for this is the main cause of impure blood, and of those obstructions in the system which, in some cases, entirely break down the health, and in many others cause such a depression of mind that life is not merely bereft of all enjoyment, but is frequently a burden to carry about. For such, medicine is no good; riding is the grand panacea; the only effective doctor.

THE LADY'S SEAT.

To be a good horsewoman a lady must sit correctly in the saddle, and this is the first, and not by any means the least important, consideration to be attended to by all who would acquire the art of easy and graceful riding. No amount of practice will compensate for the neglect of this elementary, but indispensable requisite. It is true, a lady may be able to trot, canter, and gallop, with comparative ease to herself, who has never acquired this first lesson of learning to sit in the saddle, but she will never appear otherwise than very awkward to beholders, to whom she will at all times present the appearance of a novice, or one who is just beginning to ride. She will never

elicit the remark: "How well that lady rides!" or, "What a graceful rider!" On the contrary, her riding will create a feeling of uneasiness that she may possibly come to grief, by being thrown from the saddle she sits on so awkwardly. I say she may ride with "comparative" ease to herself, but it will be an ease, if I may so speak, that will be acquired by the expenditure of much unnecessary muscular effort, and will result in great fatigue to the whole body, if the riding be continued long. Moreover, the grace of the figure is entirely destroyed, for the time, by an awkward seat.

A lady may possess a perfect figure, graceful and pleasing in every movement, but every charm will vanish the moment she mounts her horse, if the A B C—as I may call a correct seat—of

good riding has not been studiously and carefully acquired. On the other hand, a naturally indifferent, and even very ungraceful figure, when well seated and poised in the saddle, presents a pleasing and graceful sight; for it manifests the possession of a great and valuable accomplishment. Ladies of unprepossessing figures—if there be any such—have here a powerful weapon within their power, with which to turn the tables upon their otherwise more highly favoured sisters. An easy, natural seat in the saddle will give charm to a figure destitute ot natural endowments. Ladies should, therefore, spare no pains to make themselves thorough masters of this first lesson in riding.

When a lady mounts a horse for the first time the tendency is to sit *back* in the saddle, bend the back and thrust the head forward.

Apart from the ungainly appearance such a position or posture presents, it is impossible for the movements of the body to harmonise with those of the horse, which is the great secret in riding well. With such a seat almost every movement of the rider will be antagonistic to the movements of the horse; and both horse and rider will, in consequence, use far more energy than is necessary, resulting, of course, in a corresponding amount of unpleasantness and fatigue. The rider should sit well on and *into* the saddle, so to speak, and not on the back part of it. The weight of the body should rest firmly on the horse's back, head and shoulders erect, or slightly inclined backward. There should be no leaning, hanging, dragging or straining of the body at all, but a perfect sense of rest in all the muscles.

The rider should feel that her weight is pressing naturally and perpendicularly upon the back of the horse. The hips should be slightly inclined inward, and the right knee pressed firmly, but gently, down betwixt the crutch and the saddle. The crutch is merely the support for the leg, and is not intended to assist the rider in any other way. On no account must it be used to keep the body in the right position; the balance must be maintained without regard to the crutch. Many ladies look to the crutch as a kind of safety-peg intended to prop them up, or prevent their falling off. The habit of thus regarding the crutch begets a false and injurious reliance, which is very prejudicial to good riding; and no rider, while it lasts, will ever become a horsewoman.

Many other bad results follow from this

pernicious practice: the arm and leg become sore and bruised, and the horse's back, by the constant shifting of the saddle and the rubbing caused thereby, is liable to break out into sores, which may incapacitate him for work for a long time, and, in some cases, do him a permanent injury. From the knee to the ankle let the leg rest on the side of the saddle, the toes should be depressed, and the heel drawn back to the left knee. This action, by bracing the muscles of the calf of the leg and causing natural pressure on the saddle, creates a feeling of security The thigh of the left leg should be pressed close to the saddle, with the knee well up under the crutch, and the foot resting naturally on the stirrup, to give the necessary assistance in trotting. Also in cantering, galloping and leaping the right heel should be drawn back firmly and strongly to the left knee,

with the toes of the right foot depressed, the left knee being brought well up under the crutch, and the left hip well forward, so as to keep the hips in the same plane as the shoulders, or what is generally called, square with the shoulders. The arms, from shoulder to elbow, should rest naturally near the sides, and be kept in that position at all times. They should not be raised or moved about, as, in addition to rendering less secure the seat, such actions are extremely ungraceful and displeasing. By keeping the arms pressed down to the sides the balance of the body is more easily maintained. The hands should be carried in the centre of, and about three inches from, the body, with the nails turned towards the rider.

When mounted on a fresh or spirited horse be careful to keep the hands low down, and the

body well erect, or slightly inclined backward. With an inexperienced rider it is so natural to bend forward the moment the horse begins to be a little restive. The movement is an unconscious one, and quite natural; but it must be strenuously fought against and overcome, for the moment the body loses the correct position all power over the horse is lost; and the rider becomes the sport of his movements. Whenever the horse shows signs of impatience, or begins to caper about, sit firmly into the saddle, with the head erect, so as to be ready to preserve the balance, should he turn quickly to the right or left, or otherwise misbehave himself.

It requires some experience in riding to sit a horse well when he is very fresh or restive: but a little reflection will convince us of the absolute

necessity of keeping the right position, if we are to maintain proper control over the horse. It is only by being able to balance the body well that control can be kept over the reins, the handling of which is of the very *utmost importance* in riding. Few, indeed, even among accomplished horse-women, ever learn to handle the bridle reins to perfection; and the majority do not attain to even moderate skill in this respect. The more or less hard, rigid hand is the rule, and the light, delicate elastic hand the great exception. Only long and constant practice will give one what is called "good hands." Let ladies bear in mind that a high-bred, spirited horse will chafe and fret more under bad handling of the bridle reins than under any other manifestation of bad riding. I have seen some horses driven almost frantic by the

rider's stiff, unyielding hold over the reins, and the sudden jerks on the mouth which follow.

To handle the reins well is a great art, and should be acquired, no matter how much trouble it may occasion; for this is the last and crowning accomplishment of the thorough horsewoman. Not *strength* is required, but *art*. The *slightest* strain on the horse's mouth is sufficient, in the case of high-spirited animals, to control all his movements, and make him subservient to your wishes; whereas the "iron hand" will make him quite unmanageable, and not only render the exercise of riding extremely difficult, but jeopardise and endanger the life of the rider.

Ladies, in learning to ride, have not the advantage of gentlemen. The latter get the best practice in acquiring the balance by riding bare-

backed, or on the rug and roller. Of course, ladies are excluded from this excellent practice. They must, from the first, observe the correct seat, and carefully avoid any negligence in this respect.

It is not a difficult matter to learn to ride well, and when once acquired it becomes habitual. It is merely a matter of skill, and not at all dependent upon the formation of the figure, as many ladies seem to think.

No lady should venture into the hunting field until she has secured a fairly firm seat, and feels herself master of her horse. Riding to Meets is good practice; the horses go much better in company, which they enjoy as much as the rider. The most valuable and effective lessons, however, are those obtained in the hunting field, when

riding hard to hounds. For thoroughly shaking one into the seat there is nothing like it, whether for man or woman. The excitement of the Chase sends the blood coursing through the body, subdues every feeling of nervousness and timidity, and fills the mind with exciting and pleasurable sensations, to the exclusion of all thoughts and feelings of danger or fear. It is astonishing to see the way ladies, who are by no means good riders, will sometimes take the roughest country, and go with break-neck speed, under the excitement of the moment, where they would not otherwise venture even to walk their horses. Nevertheless, I strongly advise ladies not to venture to follow the hounds until they can ride with ease, and leap ordinary hedges, &c., without fear or misgiving. Bold riding is commendable, but only when coupled with *skilful* riding. It is the bold bad rider that comes to grief, as a rule.

In regard to ladies' dress I need say nothing here; the fashions change, and most ladies will follow the prevailing fashions of the day. Similarly in regard to saddles and bridles: though these may be said to lie outside the attention of ladies, and to be the business of gentlemen, or male servants. A thoroughly good horsewoman will, however, before she mounts cast her eye over her horse's furniture, and see that everything is in its proper place and correctly adjusted. She will feel the girth, put her finger between the curb chain and lip, see that the bits are not drawn up too tightly in the mouth, cast a glance at the saddle, and satisfy herself generally that all is as it should be. Of course to do this, she must qualify herself by learning how to detect the imperfections, *i.e.*, she must learn how a horse ought to be saddled and bridled.

For the manipulation of the reins and inspiration of the horse, &c., I must refer lady readers to the "GENTLEMAN'S SEATS," where they will be found fully treated. The management of the horse, and most of the rules to be observed in riding apply equally to ladies and gentlemen. The former should, therefore, read carefully the next chapter of this book.

THE GENTLEMAN'S SEAT.

It is, no doubt, true of horsemanship, as of every other accomplishment, to attain to great proficiency it is necessary to begin while very young; and further, it is equally necessary to have an inborn love for the horse, and to take great delight in the exercise of riding. The writer remembers when a young boy the pleasure it gave him to be put on a horse's back in the stables, where he would sit for hours together enjoying the situation. Great proficiency, however, is not to be expected by the majority in any undertaking, and riding is certainly no exception to the rule, but it is quite within the power of every person to become a tolerably good rider at almost any period of life. "Bend the twig while

it is young," however, is a good old proverb, and one, the truth of which, I have had ample means of proving in relation to riding, during my experience of some forty years or more.

The younger the pupil the more quickly the art is acquired, and with more satisfactory results to both teacher and pupil. Of course it is always better to begin riding under the instruction of a *good* master, but unless he be really a *master* of his business it is as well, and I will even go the length of saying, it is even better to do without him. My advice then to all is, when possible, take a course of lessons under the tuition of a master. There are several reasons why this is preferable to being guided by theory alone, independently of the superiority of practical instruction over the application of remembered rules.

In the first place, every good riding establishment possesses horses that have been thoroughly trained to comport themselves in accordance with the requirements of those who are learning to ride, or, it may be, mount for the first time. The advantages of this can scarcely be over-estimated, especially in giving confidence to the pupils, depriving them of all fear, and thereby enabling them to bestow all their attention and efforts upon the preliminary instructions. With horses that have long been accustomed to riding-school instruction there is absolutely no danger of a pupil being thrown, for the horse knows as well as teacher and pupil that he must be on his best and quietest behaviour, in order not to endanger his rider.

Moreover, many things can be done in a riding school that could not be attempted in the

open space; and, should an accident occur, the soft tan renders a fall comparatively harmless, and the education of the horse teaches him, under such circumstances, to stop at once. For these and many other reasons, needless here to specify, I strongly advise my readers to avail themselves of good practical instruction where it is possible. Nevertheless, though I insist on this as by far the better course where it is a matter of choice, I profess in this small book to give all the instruction necessary to enable one to become a good rider, without the intervention of a master at all. I must impress, however, upon the pupil the imperative necessity of strictly adhering to the letter of instruction in every minute particular; and the importance of assiduous and untiring attention to the rules, from the moment of mounting to that of dismounting.

It is, of course, far more easy for a learner to fall into ungainly and slovenly habits when by himself than it is when under the watchful eye of a master, who instantly detects any imperfections, and corrects accordingly. There is but *one* right way, whereas there are thousands of wrong ways; and, bearing this in mind, the learner should never for a moment relax an intelligent oversight, as it were, over all his movements, postures, &c., while in the saddle. He should make himself thoroughly acquainted with the rules and instructions, and be constantly applying them from moment to moment, and he will not be long before experience will inform him of the progress he is making.

As I have said before, the earlier in life young gentlemen begin to ride the better; and the finer horsemen they become; but tolerable skill can be attained at any period, though, of course, the difficulty is greater the older we are in beginning.

In early life the body is very flexible, and answers, in its movements, to the dictates of the will with lightening rapidity. The pliability of the muscles renders their adjustment to the varying circumstances of the movements connected with riding easy and graceful. The more plastic the limbs the more easily they are brought into harmonious action with the movements of the horse, which may be said to be the ultimate analysis of equitation.

Let us suppose, then, the pupil to mount a horse for the first time. As we are not supposing the learner to be under the tuition of a Riding Master, he will probably not have the advantage of a good Riding School. In lieu of this he must select a meadow, or some place suitable for his first lessons. I should remark: in case of young boys it is necessary that they should ride ponies, or at

all events horses that are not very broad in the back, as much injury may be done to the young by stretching their legs across broad-backed horses. This is a point to which parents will do well to pay attention. For other reasons too ponies for young children are preferable; there is a greater sense of security, or, at least, not so much apprehension of danger, when the pupil is not raised very high from the ground. With the timid more especially all feeling of danger should be avoided as much as possible, as it not only retards progress, but is apt to leave a lasting impression, which is detrimental to ultimate success.

Care should be taken also to select a horse free from tricks and vice, and in every way reliable. Apart from the danger of putting a novice on a horse that cannot be depended on, a fall or fright in the beginning will so unnerve many, as to

create an antipathy, and, in some cases, a positive dislike, to riding, which no after experience can entirely cure. I have known many such cases; and I cannot too strongly impress upon parents and guardians the importance of paying great attention to this point. Confidence is a very necessary element in riding, and to induce this no pains should be spared. Once let it be destroyed, or even thoroughly shaken, and a lasting injury is done to the pleasure and profit to be derived from the noble exercise. I have known fairly good horsemen who never sufficiently recovered from some early fright to enable them to mount without a nervous dread of impending danger.

Let us always bear in mind the *fact* that a shock to the nervous system is a *permanent injury*, which abides with us to the day of our death; and that nothing is more calculated to produce such shocks,

in delicate nervous children, than the injudicious selection of horses for the early lessons. We, who are at home in the saddle, are too apt to forget the feeling of peril which, in the days of our youth, filled our young minds when we found ourselves striding a horse for the first time. It is well, however, to make an effort to recall those experiences; they have a salutary effect upon us in our dealings with the young; and in other respects than those of equitation. While observing great care and attention in the selection of a quiet reliable horse for the first lessons, the pupil must not be made aware of the necessity for such care. It is of importance that his mind should be as free as possible from anxiety on the score of danger; and, indeed, under judicious management there ought to be little or no danger.

For the first few lessons the single rein snaffle should be used. Double reins are difficult to

manage, until some progress has been made, and the pupil should be taught first to handle easily the single rein. Moreover the curb rein requires some little care and skill, and should not be used until the learner can keep his balance tolerably well. Few horses will stand the iron hand of the novice jerking, and hanging on to, the curb. It is better to begin without a saddle, but if the pupil greatly prefers it there is no objection to its use, until he gains a little confidence, when it should be dispensed with for a rug or skin, fixed over the back of the horse. In these early stages it is better perhaps, especially for adults of good solid proportions, to mount from an elevation.

To fall into the easy natural seat requires little effort. The pupil should sit well to the front, nearly erect, with head and shoulders slightly inclined backwards. The whole weight of the

body should rest naturally on the seat, or what are called by anatomists, the *Ischium* bones. There must be no perceptible effort to sit thus at ease; for ease and effort are, in this conjunction more especially, antagonistic. And the learner may know that all the time he finds it necessary to use much effort he has not acquired an easy, and therefore natural, seat. Let the legs hang at ease by the horse's side, without any contraction of the muscles. To use an expression understood in this application, he should "hang them out to dry." The only exception to the complete abandonment of all muscular control over the lower extremities is the foot, the toes of which should be raised and the heel depressed. It is true this action will contract and brace the muscles of the legs, but will not interfere with their easy and natural position.

The reins may be held in either hand, or by both, and frequently changed from one hand to the other, so as to give facility in handling. I shall have more to say about the bridle reins later on. The hand, or hands, holding the reins should not be too far in front of the body; but at the same time they should not be held rigidly at one distance. The hand should play easily backward and forward, with the movements of the horse's head, but must not be moved *up* and *down*. Accustom the bridle hand to be carried within a few inches—say three or four—of the body. If it be held far in front the balance of the body is interfered with; and, in fact, it is impossible to sit well and manage the horse with the bridle hands stretched out far in front. This is a point of some importance, and must be carefully attended to in the beginning, otherwise progress will be delayed, and results unsatisfactory.

It will be found that the great tendency is to get near the horse's head, *i.e.*—to lean forward, and hold the hands far in front; but this must be checked at every moment, and corrected as often as it occurs. A very little experience will convince the learner how necessary it is that his body should be in the centre of gravity over his horse's back. And although it will require much practice to enable him to retain this position, with all the animal's movements, nevertheless he must never lose sight of the fact that it is not merely the correct position, but one which it is imperatively necessary he should occupy with ease, if he is to become a good horseman. Do not be in a hurry to trot or canter, let the horse walk at his ease, accompanying every movement of his body with corresponding movements of your own. There must, however, be no great efforts discern-

ible in obtaining this harmony of action between horse and rider, nor must there be any movement off the *Ischium* bones; the harmonious movement is merely in the body, from the hips upwards. The seat ought to become, as it were, a part of the horse, and the more firmly it adheres to his back the better. The hips are the pivot on which the body is poised; and although it is not necessary for the accomplished rider to pay any attention to the fact, it is well for the novice that he should do so, as it concentrates his attention upon one of the necessary things to be observed, and thus helps on progress.

As soon as the pupil feels himself thoroughly master of his body, and can turn and move about at ease, he should practice swinging his legs backward and forward, first one leg and then the other.

In doing this the body should not be moved, but kept in the correct position. It will also help to give balance, and facility to his movements if he turn his face to the rear of the horse, first to the right and then to the left, with the corresponding hand resting on the back, just behind the seat. All these movements should be done, of course, while the horse is walking. They will help materially to give confidence, and facilitate the acquisition of the balance. Several lessons may be devoted to walking only; and, in fact, it is not advisable to trot until the learner feels himself pretty secure in his seat at the walk, and can move and turn about at his ease, without fear of losing his balance. The time devoted to each lesson must vary according to the strength, &c., of the pupil; but should not be less than one hour, as a rule.

He may now begin to trot, still on a skin or rug, and with the single snaffle rein. Now he will find his difficulties begin, and will lose his balance at almost every step, which he must exert himself to recover as often as lost. Trotting is undoubtedly the most difficult part of learning to ride. When one can trot easily bare-backed everything else in riding comes without much trouble. Sit upright and let your steed bump you up and down: this process is not a pleasant or agreeable one; but what it lacks in this respect, it more than compensates for in value; for nothing is so effective in securing a firm seat as trotting without saddle. Never mind about attending to any of the graces of riding just yet; go on persevering with the trotting, without any attempt at rising or keeping in harmony with motions of the horse. Patience and perseverance will reward

you for this laborious, but necessary practice, as soon as you get promoted to the saddle. Do not raise your hands or arms while trotting, by so doing you present a very ungraceful appearance, contract bad habits, make yourself unnecessarily top-heavy, and so lose your balance.

Keep the arms close into the sides, and the hands well down, and trot on as often and as long as you like. Drill yourself at this day after day, and, if necessary, week after week, until you can go at a fast trot with ease and comfort; so far as comfort can be had from such exercise. An hour or two's practice on the rug and roller is always useful, even when one can ride well. It improves the seat, and gives greater strength and security to even acccomplished riders.

The pupil may now study the animal's movements, and rise while trotting, as they do in

the saddle. This is a process which it is very difficult, and almost impossible to describe so as to convey much useful information; for the body does not really rise from the horse's back as it does in the saddle, but by a muscular effort of the whole body, from toes to shoulders, the seat is eased up and down at every step, so as to be in unison with, and not antagonistic to, the up and down motion of the horse's body and peculiar movements of his shoulders.

This kind of trotting brings into action different sets of muscles to those used in the bolt-upright, up-and-down, bump, bump trot. Considerable movement and flexibility of the back is required, and a far more intelligent appreciation of the horse's action. In fact, the pupil must now begin to study the rythm of motion,

and co-ordinate the movements of himself and his horse. At this stage of our instructions the legs must be brought into action. At every effort of the rider to raise his body, in consonance with the rising of the horse, he should press his knees and calves closely to the animal's sides, and feel his movements, as it were, from moment to moment. This is capital practice, the value of which it is impossible to over-estimate; and he who would ride well must pay considerable attention to it. It is, no doubt, very hard work; but there is no "royal road" to riding any more than to learning. The pupil will fully appreciate the value of his industry when he comes to the luxury of a saddle. The difference may be described as a transition from a wooden-bottomed, high-backed chair, to an easy lounging chair.

If the pupil has carried out the instructions thus far he will have made considerable progress; and cantering, which is the next step, will be found comparatively easy, much more so, in fact, than previous exercises. A more careful attention to the reins will be required in cantering than in either walking or trotting, as we have hitherto practiced them. The horse must be what is called collected more, and a firmer and more sympathetic feeling maintained over his mouth and movements.

To collect a horse, in the full sense of the expression, is to have him well in hand, with his limbs and frame well knit, and disposed in such manner as will enable him to give the greatest and most perfect expression to his strength and agility. In his wild state, when he is under no control, and subject to no influence but that of his own nature,

he collects himself by natural impulse. Notice in our own fields, for instance, a well-bred horse turned loose; with what proud grace hecarries himself, trotting or galloping, head erect, hind legs well up under him, and the fore legs full of vigorous action. He gives the beholder the impression of an animal whose vital energy pervades his whole being, inspiring and invigorating every part, and creating that unity of action without which he could not exert his whole strength, and which is but another form of expression for being collected. He is, in fact, master of himself. But when he has a rider on his back his movements are no longer at the dictation of his own will; he feels and knows this, and, except under moments of excitement, abandons himself more or less to the will of his master. The rider must do for him in his civilised state what nature does

for him in his uncontrolled condition. To collect a horse well, however, is a part of riding which none but accomplished horsemen can manage skilfully; and the first lesson in this necessary accomplishment may be had when cantering without the saddle. I shall have more to say on this point when we reach the saddle.

There is a great difference in the paces of horses—some being very much smoother than others; but with most the pupil will find cantering an easy, undulatory movement. He should sit well down on the horse's back, head and shoulders slightly inclined backward, and his back bending slightly, or rather, more properly speaking, deprived as much as possible of all rigidity, so as to be able to keep in unison with the motion, and the seat firm and immovable. There must at

all times be as much plasticity as possible in riding. I do not mean that the rider should imitate a jelly fish, and wabble about in his seat, quite the contrary: his body and limbs should be well braced, and possess, as far as possible, the characteristics of whalebone — strong, tough, and pliant.

To ride without reins is very good practice; but, of course, in this case the horse should be longed. It teaches the pupil to maintain his balance independently of the reins, which is of great import ance to good riding. One of the great faults to be overcome, and which *must* be mastered, is hanging on the bridle reins; so that the horse is asked to carry the rider in his *mouth* as well as on his back. No horse of any spirit will stand this kind of treatment; or, at least, he will fret and

chafe very much under it. Another good practice is to place a stick across the shoulder blades, or a little below them, and hold it there by the arms, pinning them back. Both these practices, however, present some danger of falling off, especially the latter, if the balance is lost; and for that reason I do not recommend them; though they are, without doubt, the most valuable aids in making a good and fearless horseman.

We may now begin with the saddle, which the learner will be fully able to appreciate. No sooner will he find himself seated in a good comfortable saddle than he will acknowledge the necessity, and the value of the bare-backed exercises, through which he has so laboriously passed. There are several kinds of saddles in use, some of which have been specially devised for the

purpose of rendering the seat more comfortable and secure. But, inasmuch as the latter can only be attained by becoming a good horseman, and the former is very much a matter of taste, I do not think it advisable to discuss the subject in these pages, further than to say that it should not be too small or too large.

I, myself, have always found a well-made English hunting saddle the best for all purposes. It is comfortable and enduring; and, in my judgment, less tiring to the rider—especially if the exercise be prolonged or severe—than any other kind. Respecting this saddle there are not two opinions among hunting men, whose great experience certainly entitles them to speak with authority on the subject. A full sized saddle will fit most horses, but there are,

of course, limits to this; and care should be taken that they are not exceeded; otherwise the pressure over the horse's back will not be duly and uniformly distributed, and this will occasion rubbing and sore places. My advice is, do not economise in saddles by going to a cheap maker: his goods will generally be found dear in the end, and you may esteem yourself extremely fortunate if you escape another illustration of the old proverb—"cheap and nasty." I do not mean to say that the man who charges the highest price is always the best; but it may be taken as a pretty general rule that *very* low-priced goods are the worst.

In the matter of expense, however, in this, as in all things else, the rider must be guided by his pocket; and if this permits of it his choice

will, no doubt, lead him to be liberal in everything regarding his horse.

Before mounting always make it a point to thoroughly examine your horse's furniture. See that the saddle is not too far forward or backward. The right position is fair in the middle of his back, with the fore part just clear of his shoulders. If it be too forward it interferes with their action, and thus not only impedes his progress, but helps to throw him down, and in all respects is very uncomfortable to both horse and rider. See that the girths are neither too loose nor too tight when starting. They should admit of the finger being passed easily between them and the horse. After a little exercise they will require to be tightened: this should be done while in the saddle, by raising the right or left leg, as the case may require, over

the front of the saddle, with the foot resting beside the horse's neck. In this position stretch down the hand and tighten the girth by re-adjustment of the straps. In a similar manner the length of the stirrup leathers should be arranged as required. These are very necessary movements, and a little practice will soon render their accomplishment easy. The practised horseman can lengthen or shorten his stirrup leathers as easily while trotting as he can standing on the ground by the horse's side.

Having seen that your horse has been correctly saddled, next turn your attention to his head furniture. It is of extreme importance that the head-piece should fit well. Anything wrong in this respect will chafe and fret a high-spirited horse almost beyond endurance. It should be

neither too low down in the mouth nor too tight: and the top band should not press against his ears. Between the curb-chain and his chin there should be room for the easy insertion of one or two fingers. The curb-bit should just clear the tushes in a horse's mouth, and in a mare's it should be about one inch above the corner teeth. The learner ought, in fact, to consider it a part of his business to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the equipments of his horse; and he ought never to mount without first satisfying himself on this point. The stirrup irons should be large enough to admit of the feet being pushed through to the ankle, with ease; and of good solid proportions.

To mount easily and gracefully is one of the minor points of horsemanship; but it is well to

acquire the habit, as nothing looks more ungainly than to see a gentleman bump himself, as it were, into the saddle. It conveys the impression that he is a novice at riding; and shows a disregard of that unity of propriety which characterises the accomplished horseman. Let all your movements be calm and deliberate; and if your horse is fidgety, and will not stand still, soothe and quiet him with voice and hand, until he will allow you to mount him without moving a leg. This may require time, and the exercise of much patience and forbearance; but success will ultimately reward your efforts, and your control over him will be correspondingly great.

I cannot too strongly impress upon riders the great importance of persevering, quietly but firmly, in teaching and compelling the horse to do what

they wish. In every such contest success improves and educates his manners, and brings him more completely under control; whereas, failure not only confirms him in the bad habits it is sought to correct, but renders him more wilful, and less obedient in all respects, from the moment of his conquest. It must be borne in mind—and herein lies the secret of man's control over the horse—that he has no *developed reasoning power*. He is not capable of "sitting in judgment" on the actions of his master; and cannot, therefore, be influenced in his conduct by any consideration of the *justice* of the treatment he receives. It is a common saying that he does not know his strength; for, if he did, he would not be the willing slave of man; which is only another way of expressing the truth that mind rules the world. I have said that the horse, owing to the complexity and per-

fection of his nervous structure, is a highly intelligent animal; and this may appear to conflict with the statement above. It is true, as everybody knows, he is an extremely intelligent creature, and answers quickly to every impulse; but it is a quickness and intelligence which is dependent upon automatic or reflex action, and not upon any intellectual perception of the justice or fitness of anything he is asked to do. In the region of action the slightest impulse will animate and stimulate him to the *repetition of former performances*; and we have reason to suppose that he is capable of forming some kind of judgment thereupon. Witness, for instance, the incident related in the early part of this treatise, of the horse refusing to leap a hedge, on the opposite side of which was a quarry. However, whatever may be the nature of his judgment and intelligence, it is

quite certain that they are not sufficiently developed to enable him to institute comparisons and draw conclusions, in the regions of moral conduct. Hence he will respond to the most unjust and brutal demands, as long as his strength lasts.

There is a wide-spread notion that man's control over the horse is due to the magnifying power of the eye of the latter, through which he sees men in gigantic proportions. This is a fallacy; for even granting that his eye does magnify objects, so that they appear larger to him than they do to us, *all* objects, *himself* included, will retain their relative natural proportions; and, consequently, the apparent size of man will not appal him, since his own size will appear to him relatively so much larger. Man, therefore, must appear to the horse as he really is, very much smaller and weaker.

The seat must be firm without the necessity of holding on by the reins. If you have to tug away at the reins to keep the balance, you can never become master of either yourself or your horse. In managing the horse it is not strength that is required, but skill. There is a delicate little boy of my acquaintance, about ten years old, who can manage the roughest horse in my stables, though he is unusually small and weak for his age. It is the light, elastic feeling of the mouth that is required, not the hard, rigid, unyielding pull, which torments the animal and hardens his mouth. Let your hands and wrists be full of elasticity, accompanying every movement of the horse's head; let your body also respond to his movements, and the unity thus established will give him an easy, graceful, regular walk.

Some horses hang their heads more than others: in some cases it is due to nature, in others to bad training or riding. To get a horse's head well up requires great skill, but not strength. Both hands should be used, the mouth delicately felt, and lifted by slight nervous electric shocks, as it were; and this should be continued during the whole of the exercise until the head is held in its proper position; having regard, of course, to the formation of the horse's neck. Occasionally it may be necessary to give him a smart jerk; but this should not be resorted to too often. Great patience and time are requisite to get him to carry his head well.

In teaching I have always laid great stress upon the inspiration the horse receives from the bridle hands. It is impossible to convey in

writing anything like an adequate idea of the impression good handling makes upon him. He can be inspired by hands and legs, and wound up to the point of his most effective exertions without either whip or spur. This was the great secret of the late Fred. Archer's success in getting from a horse the best work he was capable of performing. Fred. Archer was full of elasticity; and as soon as he mounted every muscle in his body was in a state of vigorous activity, which was instantly felt by the horse. And as he warmed to his work the sympathy between horse and rider became greater and greater; and as the will of the rider increased, in his determination to win, the inspiration and power of the horse increased in like ratio.

In saying the power of the horse increases in proportion to the determination and strength

of will of an accomplished rider, especially when both are stimulated by excitement, I may be committing myself to a theory which many will dispute, and some will deem absurd. Nevertheless, I am convinced that such is really the case; and, I venture to confidently affirm, that, other things being equal, the jockey who possesses the greatest quantity of nerve or will-power will be the most successful in his profession. He will, in consequence of his superiority in this respect, do greater things with a horse than those of less nerve force.

The action of this force upon the horse corresponds, in a measure, to the external stimuli, under which human beings are known to exert far more strength than they are capable of putting forth of their own free will. It is said that the

potential power residing in the muscles is ten times that which is manifested in the absence of strong stimulus. Under the excitement of fear, for example, people will sometimes perform astonishing feats of strength.

It is said, by those who have caught a glimpse of Fred. Archer's face when nearing the winning post, that it was almost diabolical in its set intensity of purpose. At such times all the power of his nature was called forth, and communicated to the horse; and I venture to believe that in proportion to this power will be the performance of the racer. Probably, no jockey ever equalled Archer in this respect, and, consequently, never has equalled him in performance.

The practice in trotting bare-back through which the pupil has passed will render trotting in

the saddle easy and comfortable, and few remarks will be necessary. Care should be taken to sit as close to the saddle as possible: there should be no more rising than is necessary to keep in unison with the rise and fall of the horse. Hands should be low down, elbows close in to the sides, shoulders steady and immovable. The legs should rest naturally, but firmly, against the horse's sides, heels down, toes up, and the feet steady and firm. They should not be worked backward and forward. Nothing looks more ungainly than to see a rider shrugging his shoulders up and down, and working his feet backward and forward.

Observing these rules, and all that has been said previously, it depends now upon the practice of the rider whether trotting is easy, graceful and pleasant, or otherwise. I should remark that in

trotting the *ball* of the foot should rest upon the stirrup irons, which should be pressed firmly down. The feet should not be pushed right through the irons, as in galloping.

A rider should always keep his horse well in hand, whether walking, trotting or galloping. From the moment of mounting to that of dismounting he should have perfect control over every movement, never allowing the horse to do anything against his desire. He should never be allowed to slouch along. Many valuable lives have been lost through horses stumbling and falling. Indeed, it is a matter of frequent occurrence for a horse to stumble and fall when going at a walking pace, killing his rider, or otherwise doing him serious injury.

Many such instances will occur to the reader. Now, it is no exaggeration to say that in nine cases

out of ten it is due to the negligence of the rider. Very seldom, indeed, will a horse fall when going at an ordinary pace, if his rider has him well in hand, *i.e.*, keeps a constant watch over his movements, ready at any moment to lift his head and brace him up by sharp pressure of the legs to his sides. The rider's eyes should never lose sight of the ground along which his horse is travelling. Every stone, every little hole and hillock should be noticed and avoided. A horse will travel safely enough over rough ground, if his attention is called to it by extra care and help on the part of his rider.

It should be borne in mind that the back of a horse is no place on which to carry on a train of thought; and no horse is a safe conveyance for anyone who does so. A man rides for

pleasure or health, and in either case the exercise should occupy his whole attention. I have often heard the remark that there is no pleasure in riding if you have to pay close and constant attention to your horse. This is absurd on the face of it. What pleasure can be experienced in anything in which the mind does not participate? I would ask. And if riding is resorted to for health, surely the end is worth the exertion. But it is not a matter that admits of any argument. If a man would ride safely he *must* pay unremitting attention to his steed.

A good rider always has his horse under control, no matter at what pace he may be going; and even at the expense of repeating myself I must insist on this again and again. It is as essential when walking as when galloping that his

way should be selected, and his movements regulated. Hands, feet, and legs are all brought into requisition in conveying your wishes to him. With a well-trained animal the slightest pressure is sufficient to make him understand what it is you wish him to do. With less well-mannered horses more exertion is required.

If you wish him to turn to the left, a slight pressure of the left leg, accompanied with an inclination of the body to that side, will be understood by him. If he is sluggish in his movements a touch of the right spur will help him in this movement. If he be required to turn to the right exactly the opposite motions are required. At the same time the reins should be used as aids in conveying your wishes, though the movements of the hands should be almost imperceptible.

Nothing looks more awkward than to see a rider *pulling* his horse's head round in the direction he is desired to turn. The gentlest feel of his mouth in the right direction is sufficient. Indeed, an accomplished rider will guide his horse almost entirely from the seat, by throwing his thoughts in the direction he wishes to go, and using the necessary muscular action.

I have spoken above of using the spurs, but of course it is not at all times safe to use them, nor do some horses require them. The heels, with high-couraged horses, are sufficient, until a man can ride well he had better not wear spurs, unless his animal is very sluggish. He is apt, at times, when going over rough ground, to use them at the wrong time, and so enhance his chances of coming to grief.

The manipulation of the bridle reins is one of the great arts of riding, and perfection in this respect may almost be said to comprise the whole art of equitation. For no rider can have "good hands" as it is called, without having, at the same time, a well balanced and secure seat. The wrists must be as pliant as an india-rubber ball—never rigid and hard. With every motion of the horse's head a gentle soft-pressure must be felt on his mouth; and it must be the constant endeavour of the rider to make as perfect as possible the sympathetic feeling which he will feel to exist between the natural motions of the horse's head, and his own muscular activity. Nothing but practice and unremitting attention will give success in this, the most important part of riding.

The horse is naturally nervous and easily frightened, and will often shy at objects on the road. The rider must always be prepared for this, otherwise he may be unseated and have a dangerous fall. Many horses will jump suddenly to the right or left without the slightest warning; others will give notice of their fear by pricking their ears, and eagerly looking towards the object of their dread. At every such manifestation draw your riding whip gently down his neck, speaking words of encouragement and kindness to him, at the same time tighten the reins, and brace yourself to urge him on. If the object is on the left press his right side, and keep his head to the left, and compel him to pass it, and *vice versa* if the object be on the right. In tightening the reins you must be careful not to pull him over, and should he attempt to rear they must be softened instantly.

Many imperfect riders, as soon as their horse begins to rear, hang on the reins by natural impulse. This is very dangerous, as the horse is likely to be pulled over on the rider, especially if he possess a light mouth. Whenever the horse rears he should have perfect freedom of his head, and the body of the rider should incline forward as much as possible. I can only indicate what *should* be done at such times; the doing, however, is not easy, except to the accomplished horseman. If a horse swerve round suddenly on his hind legs it is better to go with him, and not to attempt to stop him, as, by so doing, you are likely to pull him over. At the same time check all such manifestations.

Never allow him to turn away from any object he shows fear of. Take him gently but firmly up

to the object; let him touch it with his nose, and as soon as he finds it will not hurt him his fear will vanish. At such times he should not be whipped or otherwise harshly treated; this will only increase his fear and do him much harm. Some people say let him *smell* the object, but it is not the sense of smell that re-assures him, but the sense of *touch*. In this respect, as in many others, he resembles ourselves; we are not afraid of any object which we can handle with impunity.

Frequently a horse, or horse and cart coming behind you will cause him to execute some sudden movement, always be prepared for this, by bracing yourself and keeping his head straight to the front. If he hears a noise behind him he will sometimes turn partially round, and show signs of some little excitement. If you do not check

him at such times he will think you encourage him in his bad habits, and they will grow upon him.

Do not allow him to show the slightest sign of jealousy of other horses beside you withont checking and chastising him at once; otherwise he may kick and seriously injure his companion's horse. Whenever he lays his ears back you may know he is up to some mischief, "prick and pull" immediately, and let him hear the voice of rebuke. As a general rule I would say that while the horse should uniformly have kind and gentle treatment, he should never for one moment be allowed to forget that you are his master.

In approaching him never do so timidly, nor put your hand upon him hesitatingly. If you do he will know at once that, if you are not down

right afraid of him, at all events, you have some fear of him, and he will quickly take advantage of it. Approach him, if at all, with the greatest confidence, firmly pat and stroke his neck, and if he shows signs of temper speak sharply and peremptorily, and if necessary deal him a severe cut. Of all tricks of temper he must be broken, and this can only be done by letting him understand plainly that you are master, and will stand no nonsense. Kindness and patience in *teaching* him, uncompromising severity in dealing with his *wilful vices*, should be the rule in dealing with the horse.

Having gone through all those exercises bare-backed, which I consider necessary in acquiring the balance and securing a firm seat, we may now begin with the saddle. Hitherto we have, to a

great extent, ignored the graces of riding, having been chiefly concerned in teaching the pupil to feel at home, and tumble about, as it were, at ease on horseback. If the lessons have been carefully carried out he will have become an efficient, if not a graceful horseman, and the acquisition of the latter will be comparatively easy and pleasent.

A few words about mounting may be useful. When the stirrup cannot be easily reached it is well to mount from a horse-block, or any convenient object about eighteen inches in height. Stand fairly square with your horse, with the left hand take hold of the reins and a lock of the mane, and let the hand rest lightly on the neck; the right hand at the same time should be placed firmly with perpendicular pressure, and grasp on

the hind part of the saddle, a little toward the off side, the body should then be braced for an elastic spring, moving the right hand as the right leg is thrown over the back into the saddle.

There must be no *pulling* or hugging at the saddle, and scarcely any display of force beyond the firm downward pressure of the right hand. Perfect command should be felt over the body at every stage in mounting, the motion completing the seat should be calm and deliberate, so that if necessary the rider should he able to pause midway at any stage and balance himself. To see a rider tug away at his saddle, and lump himself into it with head bending low on his horse's neck is very ungainly, to say the least, and gives beholders the impression that he is unaccustomed to riding. The toes of the left foot when mounting

should be turned slightly towards the horse's head, to prevent them coming in painful contact with his belly.

The moment the rider is in the saddle the reins should be gathered up and arranged. They should be held in such manner as to enable the rider to close his bridle hand (when he uses one only) and work it with that sympathetic and elastic feeling conveyed by the gentle squeezing of a soft india-rubber ball.

The snaffle rein should be passed from the back of the left hand through the little and second fingers, and passed out again in front through the third and fourth finger, the curb rein should be picked up outside the little finger and and passed out beside the snaffle rein between the third and fourth fingers. The right hand should

then pass along them, being careful not to twist them, and the two should be brought inside the fingers of the left hand, and held between the thumb and fore finger. In this manner the bridle hand can be closed and pressure obtained, and regulated as desired by the motion of the hand.

When both hands are used the same manner of holding the reins is adopted, except that the right hand reins are grasped by all the fingers and thumb of that hand.

It is better to ride with both hands than with one. After a little practice it will be found as easy to carry the whip while holding the reins as without them. With both hands the rider has far greater command over the horse, and can convey his wishes with greater facility and effect.

The observations regarding the seat, bare-back, apply equally to the seat in the saddle. The rider should sit well *into* the saddle, and not back on the cantle, as so many do. This latter ungraceful seat thrusts the head and body forward, and renders the maintenance of the equilibrium quite impossible. In fact no man who does not sit well into his saddle *i.e.* to the front can ever become a good horseman. Head and shoulders should be slightly inclined backwards, heels depressed, toes raised, hands down, but nothing *rigid*

Let it be observed that there is as much room for the display of good riding in walking as in any form of equitation ; and, indeed, I might almost say that a good rider is detected the moment he sits in the saddle.

Between horse and rider there must at all times be perfect union and sympathy, no matter whether in walking, trotting, cantering, galloping or jumping, and to attain this union and sympathy is to become a good horseman in the fullest meaning of the expression. Every limb, every muscle must be full of life and rigour; and if the reins are handled correctly and effectively the horse will quickly answer to the inspiration thus conveyed to him.

Let two riders mount, one after the other, the same horse, and each walk a mile, the first merely sits on his horse, and, may be, holds the reins more or less tight, that horse will shuffle and sprawl along, and give you the impression that he is an ill-trained, ill-mannered brute. Let the second rider mount him and almost instantly the

inspiration of good horsemanship will transform him into a noble, handsome creature, with life, vigour and action, and every step he takes will imply as plainly as possible that it proceeds from the will of the rider, conveyed to him by the electric current which perfects the unity of movement between the two.

No horse will be at his best, or even walk well, that is not well ridden. And no horse is a safe conveyance with a bad rider on his back. He is equally in error in pulling him up and in giving him his head, he does the latter when he should do the former, and *vice versa*; and the result is many a good horse stumbles or falls through the fault of his rider.

I have observed a great tendency in riders (and some, not by any means bad horsemen in

other respects) in passing over rough and uneven ground, to hold their horse's head tightly up, under the impression that by so doing they were preventing him from falling or stumbling. Nothing can be more erroneous, or more dangerous in practice. A moment's consideration ought to convince everyone of this.

A horse is quite intelligent enough to know how to pick his way, and where to place his feet on rough ground; but how can he use that intelligence and caution when his eyes are held high up in the air, and he is not permitted to see the ground? The rougher the way the more necessary it is he should have his head almost entirely free. He will carefully pick his way, planting each foot in the safest place, and will brace himself for the necessary exertion. I do not mean that the reins

should be thrown loosely on his neck, or that he should be abandoned entirely to himself. A careful feeling should be retained over his mouth so as to be ready instantly to help him should he stumble; but in no case should it be so tight as to impede his progress. In walking over gaps in walls the slightest interference with his freedom of action is likely to throw him down.

In all his difficulties sympathise with him, and encourage him by hand and voice; but at the same time be firm with him, and never allow him to turn back from any way you have determined he shall go. It is astonishing the high and rough breaks in stone walls over which horses will climb if rightly handled. I am not speaking now of jumping, but simply walking. Let him have his head, feel his mouth *gently*, and let him hear

your voice, and he will know that you recognise his difficulties, and will take greater courage therefrom.

Probably no man has ever entered fully into the natural bond of union connecting man and the horse. The practical realization has always fallen far short of the possibility, notwithstanding the wonderful developments we occasionally read of.

One of the most essential and useful qualities in a hack is that he should walk well, and to teach him a good walking pace is capital practice for the pupil. It helps to the attainment of what are called "good hands," the most difficult art of horsemanship. To possess good hands, *i.e.*, a light and even touch on the mouth, you must be able to ride without reins.

Jumping is a part of riding, every good rider can sit a horse jumping, or, at least, ought to be able to do so. And I have often told my pupils that I cannot teach them to jump. It is no use for any person to attempt this part of horsemanship until he has become a fairly good rider, and then, being well mounted, he may safely take any ordinary leap without fear. Sit firmly in your seat, hands well down and arms to side, and let your horse know that you expect him to take the leap you put him to. Keep the body erect when the horse rises, and when he alights on the opposite side keep him well in hand, but do not interfere with his freedom of action. When taking walls and other heights do not go headlong, but slacken and steady his pace, as it is not the long stride that will carry him over, but the

vigorous spring, and for this he must be steadied and collected. The long stride is of course required for wide streams. He who jumps his horse for the first time will not of course select any very great height; he will begin with low objects, rising to greater heights as he progresses. A little experience will soon give confidence, and the rider's ambition in this respect will be held in check only by the jumping power of his horse.

I have not thought it necessary to enter at all into the subject of hunting, as it really forms no part of the subject-matter of riding. I have now said, I think, all that can or need be said on riding, and he who carefully puts in practice all my instructions cannot very well fail to become, if not a *good*, at least, an easy and tolerable horseman.

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